News release

Ready for action

20 May 2003

The Met Office in Exeter becomes a reality today with the opening of Eddystone, the first fully equipped block of the Office's new headquarters. Over the next few weeks the first staff will start to arrive on site, with most moving in between August and November. By September the first forecasts will be produced from Exeter.

Building contractors Costain Skanska handed over use of the office block and a newly equipped IT hall, to the Met Office's Relocation Director Alan Douglas, at an official ceremony this afternoon. Eddystone is the first of nine blocks that go to make up the new building, which is based on Exeter Business Park. Although, over the last few months some Met Office staff have been working in Exeter, they have been based at rented offices while the building is being constructed.

Alan Douglas said: "Just before Christmas we were given the keys to the door of the new building. Now we are actually seeing things take shape inside, and have our first operational IT systems in Exeter which is a major milestone. Over the next few weeks staff will be settling into their new offices and we are looking forward to finally making Exeter our new home."

Notes

Background to the move: In 1961 the Met Office moved from three separate locations around London to new custom-built accommodation in Bracknell, Berkshire, and, for many years, this building has served us well. But in those 40 years, the organisation has expanded and the building has become less suitable. Two years ago, we realised that we needed state-of-the-art accommodation if we were to continue being at the forefront of weather prediction. The search for a new location for the Met Office began late in 1999 when it became apparent that refurbishing the existing buildings in Bracknell, was not viable. In November 2000, Exeter was chosen, from a shortlist of four, as the 'preferred location' for the new building, following months of fact-finding and consultations. The city offers the best long-term business benefits for the Met Office and its customers. The actual site preparation started in October 2001.

More about the Met Office in Exeter

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